

Transparency Bill Causes a Stir Amongst Lobby

SALEM, OR – House Bill 2577, a bill being pushed by State Representative Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis), recently had a public hearing and is causing a stir among Salem lobbyists. The bill would increase lobbyist transparency by adopting similar reporting requirements six other states have already enacted. Among the thousands of bills filed in Salem, HB 2577 is the most tracked bill in the building by a significant margin.

HB 2577 would require lobbyists to identify who is paying them, how much they are getting paid, what bills they lobbied for, and if they were opposing or supporting the bill. This information would be added to quarterly statements lobbyists are already required to file with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

“The public deserves true transparency on what influences decisions in Salem, including high priced lobbyists,” said Rayfield. “We have transparency in campaign finance but once you get to the capitol there’s too little information about what influence money has.”

The bill would require the Oregon Ethics Commission to update their electronic filing system and website. The website would make the new information easily accessible to the public.

“This bill is unpopular among lobbyists,” Rayfield said, “Despite the unpopularity of this bill among the lobby, we weren’t elected to be popular, we’re elected to meet the needs of our constituents, and they need transparency.”

The Capitol Club, a trade group for lobbyists in Salem, has not taken an official position on HB 2577. However, many other lobbyists have voiced their opposition to the bill outside of the hearing. Rayfield is currently meeting with several lobbyists to work out the fine details of the bill and ensure the bill brings the transparency the public deserves.

“This is a common-sense policy and I am hoping my colleagues, and even the lobby, join me in this reform,” Rayfield said.

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